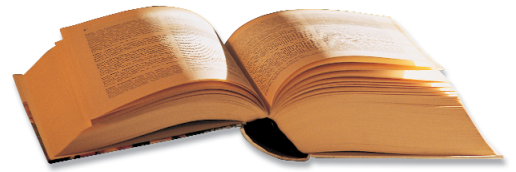


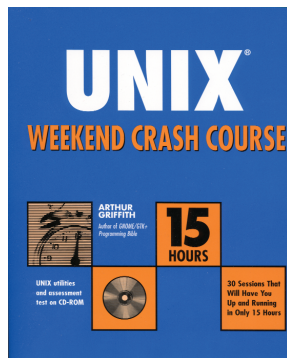
# Book Reviews



## Unix weekend crash course

If you want to set aside a full weekend to cram up on Unix, then this would be the text to use. It is divided up into short bite-sized pieces, each labeled as to the time when you should be studying, Friday evening, Saturday morning and so on. Within these time bands, the book is further divided up into half hour sessions, each of which is broken down once more into ten minute segments. The whole course is planned to take 15 hours of solid study.

If you already use Linux, then many of the early sessions will just be revision and you will find yourself speeding through them. The book is obviously meant for Windows and Mac



users as it covers the absolute basics such as logging in and passwords, all of which are familiar to Linux users.

After the introduction of the various flavors of Unix the book goes on to cover topics such as writing shell scripts, Perl programming and security issues.

By Sunday night you should know almost everything you ever needed to know about Unix, the book would even serve as a crash course introduction to Linux if you felt that you needed it as so many of the features are the same.

I felt that overall this book gave a very good grounding in the basics of the Unix operating system. The studying could be spread over a longer period if you did

not want to turn into a hermit for two and a half days. It is easy to skim over the sessions that you are already familiar with and then spend longer concentrating on less known topics.

There are regular tests throughout the book (answers are included) so that you could even test your knowledge before you start to aid you in identifying the areas that you need to concentrate your studying on.

A CD-ROM is included which proved to be very useful as it contained the various Unix utilities, code and scripts that are used as examples during each of the sections in the book. ■

Arthur Griffith

400 pages

Hungary Minds, 0-7645-4927-8

£18.99, US \$24.99, EUR 23.81

## Linux Clustering

The first thing I noticed about this book, while reading the first chapter, on fundamentals, was the US perspective, as Bookman referred to "the ENIAC, widely regarded as the world's first computer", I felt the bodies of Babbage, Turing and Zuse rolling in their graves. Perhaps it is just a personal bugbear, but it did leap out at me.

The other thing that leaped off the page in the first few pages was the reference, in chapter 2, of the Gateway Naming Utility (GNU) license.

Gateway Naming Utility? My whole world based on my belief in recursive acronyms started crumbling at the edges. I logged onto Google and found a single page referring to the Gateway Naming Utility while the rest referred to GNU's Not Unix. My world became safe again.

Minor niggles out of the way, I got down to the content of the book. It does what it says on the cover: It shows you how to build and maintain a Linux based

cluster. Starting from the very basics; how to select your hardware with a budget and Linux compatibility in mind, it deals comprehensively with the planning stage and then moves on to the practical aspects.

The book is not written with any single distribution in mind and the appendix gives websites relevant to most of the major distributions.

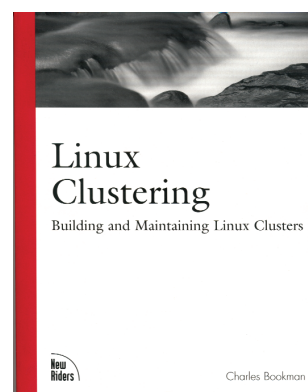
The text is divided into three major parts: Planning, building and maintaining a cluster plus a useful set of quick reference appendices.

I did not need to set up a cluster so I have not worked through the book on a practical level, but the style gives a straightforward tutorial on each stage, even to the extent of showing how to

make your own network cables to save on your overall costings.

The troubleshooting sections were fairly comprehensive and I would expect most people, with the aid of this book, to be able to get their own cluster up and running without too much trouble.

The author goes on to explain the different types of clusters such as high availability, beowulf and parallel, as well as load balancing and producing distributing applications. ■



Charles Bookman

450 pages

New Riders, 1-57870-274-7

£27.50, US \$35.00, EUR 46.44